

In the Abstract:

Please amend the abstract as set forth on the following page.

ABSTRACT OF THE DISCLOSURE

~~In a system for managing the information for the network components including hardware devices such as routers, switches, and the like, an apparatus~~ An apparatus and method is disclosed, which allows not only the current network configuration information and but also the future network configuration information to be stored, wherein the future network configuration information reflects the future facilities planning considerations and may be derived from the current network configuration information. The system includes a directory server on which a current map tree, containing current network configuration information and a temporary map tree are stored, wherein the current map tree contains the current network configuration information organized into a tree structure, and the The temporary map tree only contains the information for any components, organized into a tree structure, for which the configuration changes are expected to occur in the future. The future network configuration information may be obtained by merging the information in the current map tree together with the information in the temporary map tree that may be setup up to any future time as specified. The system further includes means that responds to the a request for the network configuration information that is applicable to any future time from any external requester, such as applications or users, for issuing a request to search and searches the trees including the directory entries that reside in the current map tree and temporary map tree, stored in the directory server and obtaining the configuration information as requested, and means for merging the configuration information obtained from the current map tree together with the temporary map tree to generate the network configuration information that is applicable to the particular time and returning the generated network configuration information to the requester.